TALES OF THE BIG LEAGUE - - - - BY C. E. VAN LOAN

The Loosening Up of Hogan

"AND five better than you again!"

"Handsome Harry" McCarter, sometimes known as the Dayton Adonis, sometimes as "The Mississippi river gambler," and at all times as the best spit-ball pitcher with a second-division team, leaned back against the cushions of the private car, bunched his small straight and patted his nose with it while he weighed the chances and studied the frank, open countenance of "Bush" Hawley, the youthful outfielder. The Ponies were on tour and the nightly poker game was just beginning.

The Ponies worked at professional baseball for a living; but the only national pastime they recognized was the ancient and honorable game of draw poker. As workingmen, they might finish in seventh place every little while, with six teams in front of them and the cellar champions clamoring behind; but drop them into a poker league, and the Ponies would be found hanging away high up in the first division.

They were a fine bunch of athletes, running to loud waistcoats, the early twenties, cards, dice and single comedness—the most happy-go-lucky, devil-may-care-we-don't outfit in the league.

"Monk" Lawson, who flattered himself that he managed the Ponies, did not believe in carrying women with a ball club. In his youth, when as he so often remarked, he had been "some pitcher, boys, some pitcher," he had traveled with one married club, and the experience had lasted him for years. He fancied unmarried men, so he signed them.

"Women make trouble," said Monk when expounding his views to the owner of the Pony franchise. "It's this way, Mr. Hagadorn; they keep the men stirred up all the time. Who's This tells Mrs. Who's That what somebody else's wife said about her husband, the women get to scrapping among themselves, and they haul the men into it, and the first thing you know you've got a grand hornet's nest on your hands. Not for mine! Give me a team of young hellers, and I'll get you a pennant here sure!"

Monk got his "young hellers" all carefully selected, but he had not yet produced the pennant. The team was making money for the owner, the fans liked the scrappy aggregation, and had hopes that some day Monk would lead them out of the wilderness and into the promised land—the first division.

And now, having stalled long enough to give the old Mississippi river gambler a chance to figure out the situation and estimate the value of his two-to-the-six straight, we return to the poker game.

"I bet him a buck for the draw," mused the handsome one, "and he raised me five. Raised me five. He's just about tightened up on me." McCarter marked a cross upon the table and traced an imaginary line toward his pile of chips. "Cross shows where the old Mississippi river gambler was shot through the heart," said he whimsically. "Dotted lines indicate which way they drug him out. All right, Bush. I got it all. How big is your full house?"

"I'm out on a limb," said Bush sadly, shoving the chips toward McCarter. "I was trying to get by with two big pair, and you went and hooked up a straight on me. I'm ruined."

"What I don't understand is why you didn't raise the pants off Bush instead of just calling. It looked to me as if that should have been the play."

It was a new voice, and the poker experts looked up for an instant. Harry McCarter snorted loudly and began riffling the cards.

"If you know so much about poker," said he sneeringly, "it's a wonder to me you wouldn't sit into one of these games once in a while and teach us how to play five cards. We don't bar nobody; it's an open game, Hogan."

The young man addressed as Hogan, who was perched upon the back of the seat across the aisle closely following the progress of the poker game, flushed slightly, but made no reply. McCarter's remark had been an innocent one, but the sneer gave an ugly sting to the words. Hogan was not thick-skinned, and he had read resentment, if not open hostility, in the short glance the players had given him.

A few moments later he climbed down from his perch, yawned, stretched and moved away toward the smoking compartment. He was neither tired nor sleepy; but he did not want the poker party to know that he had been driven away.

"You handed it to him just right, Harry," commented "Dutch" Orendorff. "What does a cheap skate like him want to be settin' around a poker game for! He's so tight he wouldn't bet five dollars on four kings and an ace! And throwin' in his gab, too. Has he spent a cent on this trip? I tell you, this Hogan is the cheapest guy I ever saw in my life, and last season I was up in the New England league I saw some tight boys, believe me. Pass!"

"It ain't coming to no outsider to criticise my play," said Adonis in a deeply injured tone of voice. In his heart he knew that he should have raised Bush, and naturally this made him more resentful. "I played Bush for a flush or a full house; and, anyway, a little straight ain't much when they begin raising after the draw. You got to know when to lay them hands down. Suppose I had raised Bush. He'd have laid down; eh, Bush?"

"Any chair warmer can tell you how to play a hand," said Bill Craig, "just the same as any newspaper reporter up in the press stand can tell you how to play ball. Barrin' Sam Crane, I never see any newspaper reporters yet who could catch a pop fly; an' I never see one of 'em steal second with the bases full. This short skate Hogan's too stingy to have a right to any ideas about circulatin' currency. Your deal there, Riley!"

Hogan sat in the smoking room, curled up on the leather couch and staring out of the window at the night lights as they whisked by the flying window. Hogan was not a mind reader, and his ears were not burning; nevertheless, he knew that he was being discussed by his fellows, and the thought was not a pleasant one, for he could guess what they were talking about.

It was Hogan's first year in professional ball, yet in a short space of time he had acquired an unenviable reputation as the stingiest player in the league, and the Ponies, the biggest-hearted, best-natured lot of boys in baseball, tolerated him simply because of his ability upon the field. To make matters worse, Hogan realized that he could not blame his teammates for keeping him outside the circle of intimate relationship.

The Ponies were a body of young men who spent their salary checks riotously—spent them upon each other like chums—and most of them were "in hock to the club" at the beginning of every season. If a man did not "keep up his end" and spend his money he did not belong; he wasn't a "good fellow."

If a club of very young men can be said to have a tradition, Hogan had violated it. He did not fit in with his associates because, as McCarter expressed it, he never spent anything but the evening."

Hogan knew all this. He would have given much for the good will of his teammates, but he was not in a position to explain matters or set up any defense. So he went early to bed, for lack of some one to talk with, and the click and rattle of poker chips soothed him to sleep.

From the beginning Hogan had been somewhat of a mystery. The paragraphers, who love to delve into the past of every recruit, had been forced to accept a bare statement that he came from the west somewhere—and that might have been any town between San Diego and Nome.

When Hogan began to pitch, and his remarkable jump ball attained a reputation, several scouts, on the trail of will-o'-the-wisp contract jumpers, made it their business to take a good look at Monk Lawson's find; but not one of them was able to state that he had ever seen Hogan before. Not even Ernie Lanigan, who knows the home town of every man in any league, was able to "get a line" on Hogan, who came whirling into the baseball firmament, a rocket from regions unknown.

Monk Lawson, who claimed that he had discovered the new phenomenon, knew very little about him, and was bound by a promise not to tell the little he knew.

The Ponies were in spring training when the unknown made his first appearance and sought out the manager.

"Mr. Lawson, I understand you are in the market for a good pitcher or two?" said the stranger.

Monk grunted. His scouts had been scurrying the country for pitching material, and all the fans between the Golden Gate and Sandy Hook were aware of the fact. Lawson had been looking over the season's catch, and he was not optimistic about it. So he grunted.

"I'll make you a business proposition," said the unknown. "I believe I can win two-thirds of my games with this club."

Monk grinned.

"Just a second," said the stranger. "You're a business man, I take it. If I pitch thirty games for you and win twenty of them, I want three thousand dollars and my expenses for the season. If I fall below that mark, you pay nothing but the expenses. I'm willing to gamble. Are you?"

"Ring for the padded ambulance, boy," said Monk. "You're loony."

"I've seen some of your new men at work this afternoon," said the stranger cheerfully. "If you can stand for some of them, you ought to be willing to take a look at me."

"See here," said Lawson, "what makes you think you can win two-thirds of your games in a real league? You ever done any pitching in fast company?"

"Never."

"Then you are crazy!"

"Not until you've seen me work," persisted the stranger. "Give me a few days to limber up in, and then try me out against your regular team. I'll gamble on the showing I'll make. In the meantime it doesn't cost you a cent. What more do you want? You can't lose anything, and you may win. Is that fair enough?"

"It is," said Monk. "What's your name, young fellow?"

"Hogan."

"Hogan? You don't look like a Hogan to me."

"John J. Hogan," said the young man. "It's a good baseball name."

"It's all of that," said Monk; "but what is your regular monaker?"

"That's my business. It's enough for you to know that I'm of age, able to make a contract, honest enough to keep it, and got no strings on me anywhere. I'm an amateur in good standing."

"Hump!" said Monk.

Nevertheless, Hogan worked out with the rest of the squab pitchers for ten days or so, sweated off eight or ten pounds of fat, paid his own expenses at the hotel, and earned his chance to pitch a practice game against the regular line-up.

That night Monk Lawson brought out a contract, and there was a long conference.

"Now, see here," said the manager. "I want to know about this. Who did you pitch with last?"

"A college team," said Hogan.

"Can that stuff," said Lawson. "Can it! I want to know."

"I've told you."

"On the level?"

"On the level."

"Well, you're a bird, then. Nobody's got any strings on you? No contracts lying around?"

"Not the scratch of a pen."

"All right. You're on."

"One thing more," said Hogan. "I would rather nothing was said about the terms of this contract. If anybody asks you, my name is Hogan, and I'm from—well, say Texas. That's a big state. Family reasons; understand?"

"I won't say a word," promised Lawson. "They'd probably think I was crazy to give a man a contract like this, and they'd know you were crazy for signing it. I'm willing to make it fifteen hundred for the season on a straight salary basis, no matter how many games you win or lose. Better think that over again."

"No," said Hogan. "Three thousand or nothing. I'll take the chance, and if I win the twenty games I won't be robbing you of anything at that."

"I should say not!"

Toward the end of August it was a foregone conclusion that John J. Hogan would win his reckless gamble. He had been one of the sensational pitching discoveries of the year.

On the diamond he was very popular. In the dressing-room conversations stopped when he interjected a remark. The Ponies were punishing their "cheap guy" after a method of their own, fully as cruel as the Coventry system. Hogan bore it well, and his conduct toward the other members of the team was uniformly courteous. Monk Lawson liked him, and, feeling that his parsimony was due to a lack of money, made him many offers of advances. Hogan refused them with gratitude.

"There's a reason why I must have a certain amount of money as soon as possible," he said. "If I had some of it now——"

"You'd blow it," said Monk. "I know. Well, kid, you savvy your own business best."

Hogan did know his own business best; knew it well enough to keep his mouth shut, which is the supreme test, though there were times when he would have given anything to tell his troubles to a sympathetic listener, for Hogan was only twenty-three.

The first of September was at hand, and Hogan had not drawn a cent from the club, though he had won sixteen games and lost five. According to the terms of the agreement, all of Hogan's living expenses were paid by the club, even when the team was playing at home. His modest hotel bills were forwarded to the management, and Monk often wondered if the pitcher spent anything at all upon amusements, or if he had any money to spend. The boy was always well dressed, and his linen was fresh and clean; his wardrobe showed no signs of parsimony.

Lawson had often wondered about this phase of the situation, and the mystery was cleared up one evening when the manager called upon Hogan at his quarters in the hotel while the team was at home. There were two trunks in the room—one of them an immense wardrobe affair—and the bureau was littered with silver-backed toilet articles, none of which had ever been seen on tour.

"Lots of class to you, kid," said Monk. "You've got enough silver junk there to start a store."

"I've been thinking of that," said Hogan gravely. "It's some I had when I joined the club. What did you want to see me about?"

That was always the way when Lawson tried to dig into Hogan's mysterious past. He ran his inquisitive nose into a stone wall.

"Business," said the manager briefly. "You've got four more games to win to get that three thousand, and a month and a half to do it in. Just to show you that I'm a good fellow, I'll let you work twice against Henderson's bunch this week. They're the softest team in the league for you to beat."

"That sounds good," said Hogan, wondering what was coming next.

"And just as soon as you win your twentieth game, kid," continued the manager, "you'll get the three thousand. After that I'm going to put you on a regular salary. That's fair, ain't it?"

"Fairer than the contract," said Hogan, sitting on the edge of the bed. "And mighty white of you, Monk. I won't forget it."

"Yes," said Lawson. "I was talking with Mr. Hagadorn the other day, and he's tickled with the way you've been going. He thought you ought to have something beside the bonus, so the sooner you get in and grab it, the better off you'll be."

"Good again," said Hogan. "But—what's this for, Monk? What's the idea?"

"I might have known I couldn't bull you," said the manager. "Here's the ace in the hole: You see, Hogan, that contract calls for twenty winning games. You remember you wouldn't sign it any other way. According to the agreement you could run out on us after you've won that money." He looked shrewdly at the pitcher, who made no sign. "Of course," he continued hurriedly, "I told Mr. Hagadorn you wouldn't run out on the club. I told him you'd stick for the end of the season."

"Why, certainly," said Hogan. "If I won the bonus or lost it, I'd stick until the season closes."

Monk drew a deep breath and felt in his coat pocket.

"That's the way to talk," he said. "Now, I've got a next season's contract here I'd like you to look over. It calls for a salary——"

At this precise point the conference wound up in a tangle. Hogan would not commit himself. He said he did not know whether he would be able to play ball for another season, but would give his answer after he won the bonus. In vain Monk expanded upon the theme of the glorious future.

Hogan was firm. "I'll tell you about it later," was the best he would say.

Monk went away from the hotel slightly troubled in his mind.

"It's the cash stake he's after," thought the manager; "and I'll bet there's a skirt tangled up in it somewhere. But if he says he'll stick for the end of the season he'll keep his word. I'll have him see Mr. Hagadorn."

It was in September that McCarter and Hogan had their clash. McCarter had been spoiling for it all season. The team was flying half way across the country to open a series in St. Louis, and in the smoking compartment McCarter was perusing the Sunday papers. From the sporting pages he drifted to the magazine supplements, in one of which he had found a highly entertaining article, dealing none too gently with the idle sons of the rich.

"These kid millionaires certainly have one swell time!" commented Adonis. "Here it says that young Oswald Van Slyck blowed a half a million in eight months, and then had to go to work. Percy Kinkaid gets a thousand a month just to stay away from home. Gee, I wish my folks thought that much of me! Listen, fellers. Here's a funny gag." Then he read from the paper:

"Not all the money-burning youths hail from the Atlantic coast. The west also has its spendthrift sons. Probably the most notable case of prodigal extravagance which California has known of in recent years is that of young Lafayette Durand Chatterton——

"Holy Moses, men! What a name!

"—— young Lafayette Durand Chatterton, son of T. Durand Chatterton, the well-known San Francisco millionaire railroad magnate and sugar king. Young Chatterton cut a wide swath for two seasons after leaving college, where he was famous as an athlete, playing half back on the Stanford football team and pitching for the college nine.

"Upon leaving Stanford he hurled himself into a money-spending saturnalia which it is believed brought about a rupture between his father and himself. At any rate, the young man disappeared several months ago, and it is reported that he is now working in one of his father's beet-sugar factories for two dollars a day, earning less money in a year than was his habit to spend in the course of an evening. It is rumored that several young women of the exclusive set are mourning young Chatterton's disappearance——

"Oh, rats, the rest is all about his love affairs! What a tight old guy that Chatterton must be! All the boy did was to put some of the old man's dough in circulation. I'd like to have a chance to spend a couple of thousand a month."

"Maybe it wouldn't be as soft as you might think." Hogan, curled up in his usual place by the window, offered this mild suggestion.

"Hugh!" sneered McCarter. "Here's Hogan talking about spending money. What do you know about it, you paper-collar sport? I'll bet you never spent more than three dollars in one chunk in your whole life. I'll bet you've got every cent you ever made hung up in a sock somewhere. I'll bet——"

Biff! Bang!

They dragged Hogan out of the smoking room, and they led the Dayton Adonis to the washbasin, where the porter rendered first aid to the injured. Hogan had slapped McCarter's face—slapped it hard—and then as McCarter leaped to his feet and put up his hands, Hogan had knocked him flat with a right swing to the nose—a very unhandy place to hit a handsome man like McCarter.

"I'm sorry," said Hogan to his bodyguard, "but it was coming to him. You can think anything you like about me, fellows, but the first one who opens his jaw to me is going to get it cracked. That's all!"

After that Hogan's life with the team was a misery to him. Monk Lawson prevented further outbreaks, but anything would have been better than the silent disapproval with which the Ponies surrounded the unfortunate Hogan. Off the field he might have been the ghost of a ball player, so little attention was paid to him, so little notice taken of his presence.

Soon afterward Hogan won his twentieth game, and was promptly presented with a bank draft for $3000. His first act was to hunt up a bank, where he opened an account under a name which did not sound in the least like Hogan. This was arranged after a five-minute interview with the president of the bank, who remained in a brown study for half an hour after his visitor had departed.

Under the new name Hogan had issued to himself and payable to his order a certified check for $2500, which he carried away with him. That night he spent two hours in composing a letter, destroying several copies before he produced one to his liking. As it was short, we introduce it here, as exhibit A for the defense. The Ponies versus Hogan; charge, parsimony.

"My Dear Father: I told you that you would not hear from me until I had made good. Inclosed you will find a certified check, to my order, for twenty-five hundred dollars. Every cent of this money I have earned with my own hands—earned honestly. You said something about sweating for my foolishness. I assure you I have sweated for every dollar of this money.

"I have been pitching baseball for the —— team in the National league. If you will look up the scores in the files of the papers out there, you will see that a fellow named Hogan has been winning a lot of games for the Ponies. That's me. You didn't say how this money was to be earned. You simply said I had to earn and save this much, and I picked the quickest way as well as the best-paying proposition. You would have done the same thing yourself. As for saving money and being economical—you won't believe this, but it's true—I had to punch a fellow the other day for calling me a tightwad. He told the truth at that.

"In addition to this, I want to say that I have been doing a lot of thinking the past six months, and I can see what a fool I made of myself. I don't see how you stood it so long, that's honest. This is no prodigal son stuff, don't think it. I was offered a contract the other night at four thousand dollars a season. I am in a position to earn my own living. Whether I play ball or not next year is entirely up to you. I believe I could be worth four thousand dollars a season to you, in a business way. Write me at the Hotel Kensington, Chicago. We will be there Tuesday, beginning a four-game series. John J. Hogan is the name. I changed it for business reasons. Respectfully,

"YOUR SON."

"P. S.—Don't fail to return this check. It isn't all the money I have, but losing it would put an awful crimp in the bank roll. I had an idea you'd like to see it and feel of it and smell it because it's the first real money I've ever earned—and sweated for."

When, five days later, the Ponies arrived in Chicago, the clerk handed Hogan a whole fistful of telegrams, and he carried them to his room at once. Perhaps he choked a bit as he read them. It would have been no disgrace if he had.

That week Monk Lawson got his answer.

"No more baseball after this season," said Hogan. "It's out of the question."

Monk argued for three days, and then gave up in despair.

The Ponies finished the league schedule at home, and Hogan pitched and won the last game. The club wound up the year in a blaze of glory and fifth place in the percentages. They were actually heading the second division, and the fans who had supported the Ponies loyally in many a cellar finish cheered up and saw visions of better things.

In the clubhouse after the game they skylarked about in boyish glee, celebrating the end of the year's work. John J. Hogan, clad in a crash towel, came in from the shower room, waited for a chink of silence in the racket, found it, and lifted up his voice.

"Boys," said he, "I'm going to give a dinner tonight down at the Argyle to as many of you fellows as care to come. I won't be with you next season, and probably won't see you all together again."

There was an astounded silence. The players looked at each other and wondered if they had heard aright. Hogan was proposing to spend some money—and at the Argyle, the most expensive, therefore the most exclusive place in the city. Hogan, who hadn't bought so much as a round of drinks all season long!

"It will be a little surprise party," said Hogan earnestly. "I'd like to have you all there."

There was a nervous movement of the men on the benches in front of the lockers. Not one of them cared to accept Hogan's hospitality; but, on the other hand, none cared to offer the direct insult of open refusal. McCarter was standing by the door. Hogan walked over to him and offered his hand.

"Forget it, Harry," he said. "The season's over. You come down to the Argyle tonight, and if you don't like my surprise party we'll put on the gloves and go four rounds to a decision. Are you on?"

McCarter flushed and stuck out his hand.

"I got you, kid," he said. "Duke me!"

Then the tension broke and the Ponies began to talk.

"The Argyle!" said Bill Craig. "Ain't that the place where they nick you 80 cents a platter for soup? Why, it would cost a million dollars to feed this bunch at that place!"

"Get around there about seven," said Hogan, as he paused in the door fully dressed. "Ask the doorman for Hogan's party, and he'll direct you to the right place."

After Hogan had gone there was an excited buzz of conversation. Monk Lawson took a hand in it.

"You fellows are all away off," he said. "You're barking up the wrong tree. You can gamble that he's pitched his last professional ball game today, so he ain't doing this to set himself in good for next season. It's something else. I could tell you something about a deal I made with this fellow that would astonish you, but I promised him I wouldn't. This Hogan is all right, and I'll bet you'll say so tonight after he pulls that surprise of his. I don't know what it is, but I have a suspicion it'll knock your eye out. Better be there, or you'll miss something rich."

The Ponies drifted away from the clubhouse discussing the mystery of the loosening up of Hogan; and they were all on hand at 7 o'clock, in a private parlor at the Argyle, waiting for their host. They sat about on the richly upholstered chairs, abashed by the thickness of the carpet, awed by the real lace curtains, and made miserable by the heavy elegance of their surroundings.

The old Mississippi river gambler was the only one not openly oppressed by the stage settings. He sat down at the piano and banged out some ragtime, for which Dutch Orendorff feared they would all be thrown into the street—and said so.

Hogan appeared, made his apologies for being late, and a head waiter, or some other great functionary, conducted them grandly down a long hall to the banquet chamber. Bush Hawley, who was in the van and had the first glimpse of the magnificence in store, started back and trod heavily upon the head waiter's patent-leathered toes.

"Class!" ejaculated Bush. "Class! The national commission never had as swell a lay-out as this!"

Which was as far as Bush could go.

Let us pass lightly over the next two hours. It is enough to say that grudges were wiped out with the soup, tongues were loosened by the wine, which came on with the canvasback duck; and through it all Hogan sat smiling at the head of the table, giving an excellent imitation of a man who really enjoyed spending money.

Some of the Ponies looked at him covertly every time a cork popped, and others attempted to estimate the cost by an addition of fives, but lost count early in the evening.

At last Monk Lawson rapped on the table and stood up, a wine glass in his hand.

"Boys," he said, "we'll drink a toast to Johnnie Hogan, a grand ball player and a good fellow! Oars up!"

The Ponies stood up and drank Johnnie Hogan in anything they found handy. Bill Craig drank him in coffee. It was Handsome Harry's baritone which started the usual refrain:

"For he's a Jolly Good Fellow!"

Hogan sat still at the head of the table, turning the stem of his wine glass between his fingers. When he rose he was greeted warmly, even affectionately, certainly vociferously.

"I can't make a speech, fellows," he began, "but I'm glad you are all here tonight—— (You ain't got a thing on us!) I'll not be with you next season—— (Forget it, kid! Forget it! Sure you will!)— and this is a sort of farewell dinner with me. (Oh, you'll be back in the spring!) I want to set myself right with you fellows—(You have, old horse! You have!) I asked you here tonight to tell you the reason I haven't been as popular as I wanted to be—(S-s-s-sh! Shut up there, Dutch!) I was in a peculiar sort of a fix. It was put up to me to go out and show that I could earn a living by hard work. I had to earn a certain amount of money and produce it to show that I'd saved it, and that was why—(Never mind that, old pal! Forget it!)"

Hogan paused and looked down the table. When he began to speak again the sentences tumbled out one after the other, and there were no interruptions.

"I know the way you felt about me. I don't blame you, either, but—it had to be that way, fellows. I had to go to work for the first time in my life. I thought I could get more money playing ball than by going into an office or digging ditches. So I asked Monk here for a job, and made him a business proposition."

Monk nodded his head as gravely as a judge. "Per'fly true," he said.

"I won out, all right," said Hogan; "and in a lot of ways this has been the best year of my life—learned to save money—and that was the toughest lesson of all, for I used to be pretty strong the other way. I'm glad I had a chance to get in with such a good bunch, even if I got in bad, and I'm going to ask each one of you to accept a little present from me—something from the tightest fellow you ever saw, and remember once in a while that, no matter how things look on the outside, there's always a reason a fellow could give if he would. I—I guess that's all. Thank you, boys," he concluded lamely as he took his seat, feeling that he had made a fool of himself by talking too much. It is a common sensation with after-dinner speakers.

Once more Handsome Harry lifted his voice in song, and the team joined melodiously, after which Bush Hawley inquired in loud, staccato accents who was all right? And every one seemed to know the correct answer.

During this pleasant ceremony half a dozen waiters entered the room and placed in front of each man a little green leather box bearing his name in gilt letters across the top.

"Do we look at these things now?" asked Dutch Orendorff.

"Just as you like," said the host. "Yes, Dutch, I think you'd better look at them now."

A deep grunt of astonishment ran around the table as the boxes flew open. Each one contained a heavy gold watch fob in the form of a medallion. In the center of the medal a pony stood out in bold relief, and above the emblem of the team winked a diamond—a real diamond. Members of a pennant-winning team never received a more handsome keepsake, and the Ponies gulped as they stared at their gifts. On the reverse side each man's name was engraved, together with the date.

The players looked from the boxes in their hands to their host, who sat grinning at the head of the table. If, during months past, these men had made Hogan uncomfortable in their presence, that particular portion of the debt was paid with interest. The Ponies stammered and blushed, one or two muttered, "Aw, you oughtn't to have done this, Hogan!" and Dutch Orendorff swore softly under his breath as he dangled the fob between his fingers.

Harry McCarter spied a card in his box, fished it out, and jumped to his feet with a yell.

"What's this?" he cried. "'Compliments of Lafayette Durand Chatterton!' Chatterton! Why, say! That's the young millionaire fellow we read the dope about in the paper! That's——" He paused, staring hard at Hogan, the question in his eyes.

"That's me, fellows," said Hogan, with a laugh. "And if you remember what that article said, you know that I wasn't always a cheap skate. I got in a jam at home—spending too much money and raising Cain around San Francisco—and I went to work. Ask Monk, here, and he'll tell you that I signed a contract to win two-thirds of my games or work for my expenses."

Once more Monk Lawson nodded his head.

"Gamest guy in the world," he said. "He just the same's bet me three thousand dollars he'd win twenty games out of thirty."

A low whistle of amazement came from McCarter.

"I'd hate to work on them terms," he said, half to himself.

"So," said Hogan, "I didn't draw any money from the club, and I had to last the season out on what little I had. That's why I had to wait so long before I could be a good fellow."

This remark naturally reminded Harry McCarter of a song, and as nobody could think of anything to say, and nobody could have said it properly if he had, the Dayton Adonis sang the song, aided by the full strength of the Pony pay roll.

"For he's a jolly good fellow,
He's a jolly good fellow,
He's a jolly good fel—low.
Which—nobody can deny!"

The Ponies maintain to this day that a millionaire can be a jolly good fellow; and, what is more, they claim to know one who is all of that, and more. Monk Lawson thinks, however, that there is such a thing as spoiling a rattling good pitcher to make a millionaire. Millionaires are common, and rattling good pitchers are not.

Harry McCarter sometimes goes to California in the winter to shoot ducks on the Suisun marshes with a Californian whom he calls Hogan. McCarter reports that Hogan plays a very stiff, as well as a very scientific game of poker.